

McLAURY (Wm.)

# A PAPER

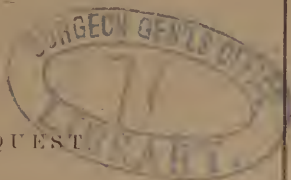
BY

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READ AT A MEETING OF THE LAST-NAMED SOCIETY,  
MARCH 19, 1884.

NEW YORK:  
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## THE SENSES—FIVE OR SEVEN?

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MR. PRESIDENT AND GENTLEMEN:—

I would preface this paper by remarking that for one unaccustomed to writing, it is no small <sup>31</sup>tax to be called upon at long and irregular intervals to produce a paper to be read before a learned society of expert writers to be criticised, however kindly such criticism may be given. For myself, I will say that it is only stern duty that impels me to undertake it; and only by employing my mind on the subject while riding from one patient's house to another, and writing with pencil in cars, and thus filling in the odd corners of time, have I been able to write it at all.

My present subject was chosen fortuitously: just at the time I was reading an article on the subject in *The Boston Journal of Chemistry*, I received a note from our worthy Secretary, Dr. J. H. Fruit-night, informing me that I would be expected to read a paper at the March meeting of this society,

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The authors consulted by the writer of this paper are S. P. Andrews, J. C. Dalton, S. T. Fowler, F. Hallock, Sir Wm. Hamilton, Hatch, Baron von Reichenbach, and possibly some others.

which has for its motto, "*Cuneus cuncum trudit*," one which I appreciate now better than ever before. I immediately decided to take for my subject, THE SENSES—FIVE OR SEVEN?

I have given my best mental effort to produce a paper that may interest, instruct, and lead to discussion.

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#### THE SENSES—FIVE OR SEVEN?

Seeing, hearing, smelling, tasting, feeling—these are called the gates to the soul, or the manifest indication of soul through the material organs of the body. The question now immediately arises, Is soul an entity or merely a product of material organs generated by a latent electric force, by Baron Reichenbach termed "od force," from Odin, the universal deity of the Scandinavian mythology, corresponding to Jupiter of the Greeks. Just here, it seems appropriate to quote an ancient philosopher, who upon being asked, "What is mind?" replied, "No matter;" and when the question was reversed to "What is matter?" his answer was, "Never mind;" and I am not sure that we can reply any more sensibly now, and surely we could not more laconically. We know some of the qualities of mind and some of the attributes of matter, but what more are we sure of?

Without pretending to decide whether soul is an entity or not, we will proceed to consider the func-

tion of the senses, known scientifically as five, proverbially as seven. 1. The nerves of special sense involve the optic, the olfactory, and the lingual branch of the fifth pair. 2. The nerves of general sensibility, and the spinal nerves through their posterior roots, include all affected by the sense of touch.

The question of will power, too, comes in here. How far are our sensations independent of will? That which we call attraction or repulsion in inorganic matter, or selection in the lower organisms, extended and developed is the same power that we call intelligent will or choice in higher animals. It is merely different in degree or amount, according as the parts are more or less differentiated or perfected. The fact of the original oneness of power and function in every part of the monar or cell body is very important and interesting. A man, being built up of cells, exhibits these properties, and in his early existence, before his organs have been differentiated to their special use, he has only the simple sense of touch all over his body, and if any one of these organs becomes impaired it again has only the sense of touch; so an imperfect eye feels but does not see. It is this fact—that all parts of the living structure are primarily alike in regard to sensation, and that certain parts are specialized so as to modify it—which has led to seeing, hearing, smelling, and tasting.

It is said that in some forms of disease, and in highly-wrought nervous states, various parts of the body may become so intensely sensitive to light that they can see, and they may even hear, smell, and taste. Thus, sensitives have been reported as being able to see with the backs of their heads or tips of their fingers. Without waiting to prove the truth of this assertion, we may seek for a foundation for it on the basis of common touch. Doubtless you each and all have experienced impressions that did not reach you through any of the five senses, the truth of which might be afterward confirmed by those senses—as, for instance, on entering a room in the dark, one often knows (instinctively, we say,) that some one else is there, and this vivid impression is afterward confirmed by sight or hearing.

As has already been suggested, all our senses, sight, hearing, smell, and taste, are but modifications of touch or feeling. The eye feels in one way, the nose in another, and the tongue and papillæ of the mouth in another. It is all touch or feeling with different instruments. In the simple monar or protoplasmic cell this sense is exhibited in one form only, there being no variety of structure, no special organ, but every part is capable of being specialized, and so modified as to become eye, ear, nose, or tongue, or to partake of their properties.

To the two or more latent senses may be attrib-



uted many of the well-authenticated cases of second sight, spiritual manifestations, and other phenomena of that character. For instance, J. Marion Sims appearing to Dr. Byrd at the hour of his death, saying to him, "James the Fourth is dead." Dr. Byrd was so disturbed that he could sleep no more, but walked the floor till morning, when a telegram announced the fact that James the Fourth (a name given to Dr. Sims by his friends on account of his being the fourth of that name in the direct line) had died just before Dr. Byrd was wakened by him. Occurrences of this kind are so frequent as to be beyond dispute. A still more noted instance is related of Swedenborg, whose home was at Stockholm. He was at one time the guest of a distinguished clergyman at Copenhagen. While engaged in earnest conversation with his host, Swedenborg suddenly became abstracted, rose, and walked the floor as though in great anxiety, going from the door to the windows and back again to the door. Upon the clergyman's asking him the cause of such strange conduct, he replied that at that moment a great fire was raging in Stockholm, and was then within one door of his own residence, and that his own family was in danger. He was then asked, "How do you know this?" He answered, "I see it." He then described the buildings on fire, the efforts made to save them, noting the exact time

the flames were subdued, and the progress of the fire arrested. The next mail brought letters and papers confirming the truth of his vision.

Just here I will merely suggest a relation between light and sound. Both are considered in octaves, there being seven prismatic colors, and seven notes in the musical scale, the bass in each case completing the octave.

Some philosophers maintain that each sense has a representative or correlative science built upon it, as the science of Optics for vision, Harmony and Music for hearing, Architecture and Mathematics for touch, etc. As touch is the primary and basic sense, so Mathematics is the primary and basic science. This is merely suggestive as to how much farther they are correlative or analogous. Sir Wm. Hamilton claims that temperature or the sense of heat and cold constitutes the sixth sense, and he also suggests another, which he calls the magnetic sense, by which sensitive persons are made happy or miserable, when within the aura of others, by their polarity, according as they are attracted or repulsed. As evidence that the senses of touch and temperature are not identical, the sense of touch may be lost, and that of temperature retained, or *vice versa*. There can be scarcely any discrimination between the painful sensations of heat and cold. Touch or sound long continued loses its effect, but

when the pressure or sound ceases, our attention is attracted thereby. There are sweet and sour odors. We may, by the sense of smell, call up sounds, melodious or discordant; and, by the same sense, tints and colors may be perceived. This may be caused by association of ideas, and may be more easily experienced than described. The sense of smell is the most delicate of all the senses, and the particles making an impression on the olfactory nerve may be infinitesimal, and wholly unrecognizable by chemical tests, or by powerful magnifying lenses, or by any other means whatever. In short, where every other evidence of the substance of the thing may be gone, there still remains, apparently, the spirit of the departed thing manifesting itself to the sense of smell. Hence some philosophers relegate this sense to the science of chemistry as its base, or relative sense, as hearing and seeing are to music and optics, in the domain of the relation between the senses and the sciences. For example, if a drop of the ottar of roses be placed in a vial, and the vial be allowed to remain in a drawer for a period of ten or even twenty years, until every evidence of the substance has disappeared, and every chemical test fails to detect anything in the vial, a distinct perfume still remains. These particles must, of course, be infinitesimal, and this has been given as the boundary line between matter and spirit. This

is beautifully referred to in one of Moore's melodies :

“Let Fate do her worst, there are relics of joy,  
Bright dreams of the past, which she cannot destroy,  
And which come in the night-time of sorrow and care,  
To bring back the features that joy used to wear.

Long, long be my heart with such memories filled,  
Like the vase in which roses have once been distilled.  
You may break, you may shatter the vase if you will,  
But the scent of the roses will hang round it still.”

Some assert that animals have senses that man has not. Many have senses more acute than man, as the sense of smell in the dog and fox, and that of sight in the eagle, the condor, and other birds. As to the sense of sight, the spectroscope has given to us astonishing minutiae in discriminating by its power the substances generating light from the planets, sun, and fixed stars, thus enabling us to know what metals and substances are undergoing chemical change, at that great distance, with an accuracy truly wonderful. Fish that live in continual darkness have no organ of vision, and those that begin life with an eye on each side of the head, but habitually have one side only exposed to light, after a time have both eyes on the side exposed, as in the halibut, the fluke, and the flounder. By a change of functions, feet may become hands or wings. Millions of facts exist, but straws serve to show the way of the wind or the flow of the stream.

What Baron Reichenbach terms Odin power or Od force is the universal force pervading everything animate and inanimate, organic and inorganic, and even the ethereal something, beyond our atmosphere, which is said to be negative Od. It embraces every form of magnetism. Its manifestations are closely connected with Od polar action in organic and inorganic nature, and form a very important link between organic and inorganic nature, also between the primitive plastic order in matter, and the plastic growth of formations resulting from compound and complex forms, and may be designated by the words *vital force*. This seventh or magnetic sense is most prominently set before our minds by the sexual magnetism. This is the most potent stimulus accessible to our race. By a wise development or a healthy exercise of the love nature there is hardly a limit to the capacities for generating health of body and mind. The supreme power bestowed this boon upon man not alone for the perpetuation of the race, by the generating of new beings, but, rightly understood and utilized, for the healthy growth and perfect development of the mind and body of the man and woman.

Sir Wm. Hamilton's idea in terming the seventh sense the magnetic sense, had reference to the emotional in our natures, that stimulus being the source of all force, both mental and physical.

All affection and love of every kind, whether paternal or fraternal, conjugal or sexual, Deific or Platonic, is based upon or developed from this seventh or magnetic sense; consequently it comes before us as a very important consideration, and if studied with the natural law as our guide, cannot fail to compensate all who will earnestly give it their attention ; so it seems that moral science and philosophy are based upon and are correlative with this seventh sense.



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